



COOPERATING AGENCIES & THE BLM PLANNING PROCESS

New Mexico Land Grant Council Meeting
December 16, 2014

Cooperating Agency Framework



- Opportunity for BLM to engage with officials and staff of other agencies in working partnerships
- Benefits
 - ▣ Incorporates local knowledge of economic, social, and environmental conditions
 - ▣ Addresses intergovernmental issues
 - ▣ Avoids duplication of effort
 - ▣ Enhances local credibility of BLM management plans
 - ▣ Encourages CA support for management decisions
 - ▣ Builds relationships of trust and cooperation
 - ▣ Better, more informed decisions

CA Eligibility

- BLM and DOI Regulations – require inviting eligible agencies and governments to become CAs on RMPs and EISs
- Any federal, state, or local agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact may be a cooperating agency
 - Jurisdiction by law: agency authority to approve, veto, or finance all or part of the proposal
 - Jurisdiction by special expertise: statutory responsibility, agency mission, or related program experience

Role of CAs in the RMP Process



- Development of Preparation Plan
 - Identify anticipated management issues and concerns
- Scoping and Issue Identification
 - Identify issues and coordination needs
- Development of Planning Criteria
- Collection of Inventory Data
 - Identify data needs
 - Provide data and technical analyses within CA's expertise
- Analysis of the Management Situation
 - Provide local monitoring and baseline data



Role of CAs in the RMP Process (cont.)



- Formulation of Alternatives
 - ▣ Suggest goals and objectives
 - ▣ Suggest allocations or management actions to resolve issues
- Analysis of Effects of Alternatives
 - ▣ Suggest models and methods for impact analysis
 - ▣ Develop and review analyses within CA's areas of expertise
- Development of Draft RMP
 - ▣ Provide information and review Preliminary Draft
 - ▣ Provide written comment on published Draft

Role of CAs in the RMP Process (cont.)



- Comment Response and Development of Proposed RMP
 - ▣ Assist in development of comment responses within CA's area of expertise
 - ▣ Review preliminary Proposed RMP
- Implementation of RMP
 - ▣ Assist in performing implementation tasks such as monitoring, projects, or enforcement
- Monitoring of RMP
 - ▣ Assist in development of monitoring strategies
 - ▣ Participate in assessing effectiveness of RMP implementation



CA Considerations

- Becoming a cooperating agency requires a significant amount of time, resources, technical expertise, and funding
- Choose projects/RMPs selectively for cooperating agency participation
- Even if an agency declines to participate as a cooperating agency, they can still participate in the NEPA/planning process
 - ▣ Scoping
 - ▣ Comments on Draft EIS
 - ▣ Protests

Status of BLM-NM RMPs, June 2015

